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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, It has come to the attention of the members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois that a celebration has been held in honor of the 100th birthday of the late Colonel John C. Robinson Jr.; and

WHEREAS, John Charles Robinson Jr. was born on November 26, 1903, in Carrabelle, Florida, to John Sr. and Celeste Robinson; he was reared and schooled in Gulfport, Mississippi; he had one sister, Bertha Robinson-Stokes; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Robinson was excited about airplanes from the time that he saw his first one as a youngster near a port in his hometown of Gulfport, Mississippi; after finishing high school, he graduated with a diploma in Auto Mechanics in 1924 from the University at Tuskegee; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Robinson, through a turn of events, attended Curtiss Wright Aviation University in Chicago with his partner, famed African-American pioneer aviator Cornelius R. Coffey; they were the first African-American men in the U.S. to be trained and certified as pilots and airplane mechanics from a government approved school of aviation; and

WHEREAS, The two men later cofounded and built the first African-American airport in the United States in Robbins in 1931; in 1934, he flew with his partner to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to introduce a plan to start an aviation program there, which later developed into the famed Tuskegee Airmen; and

WHEREAS, In 1935, Colonel Robinson went to Ethiopia to become the personal pilot for H.R.H. Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia, and was made a full Colonel in charge of flight training and mechanical training of the Ethiopian Air

1 Force; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1936, Colonel Robinson returned to Chicago and
3 became the personal pilot for Annie Turnbo-Malone, the
4 self-made multi-millionaire; Ms. Turnbo-Malone allowed Colonel
5 Robinson to use part of her property to house the private
6 "Robinson Aviation School", where he taught African-American
7 men and women the skills of flying airplanes and the mechanical
8 skills to build and maintain airplanes;

9 WHEREAS, In 1939, Colonel Robinson received advanced
10 training in mechanical aviation at Chanute Air Field in
11 Rantoul, where he also instructed some of the first
12 African-American students from Tuskegee in flying airplanes as
13 part of the now famous 99th Pursuit Squadron (Tuskegee Airmen);
14 and

15 WHEREAS, In 1941, at the request of Emperor Haile Selassie,
16 Colonel Robinson returned to Ethiopia with more than 30
17 African-American pilots and mechanics to rebuild the country's
18 National Airport and its Air Force; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
20 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
21 recognize the 100th birthday of the late Colonel John C.
22 Robinson, and we honor his many contributions as a pioneer
23 African-American pilot; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
25 presented to the Robbins Historical Society and Museum as an
26 expression of our respect and esteem.